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Thoughts on the English Government...in a Series of Letters...

by
John Reeves

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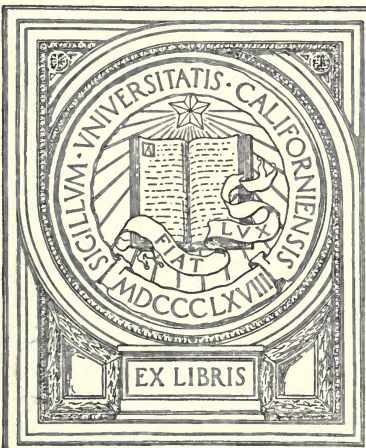

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Reeves, John

Thoughts on the English Government.

ADDRESSED TO THE

QUIET GOOD SENSE

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER THE FIRST.

ON THE

National Character of Englishmen—The Nature of the English Government—The Corruptions caused in both by the Introduction of French Principles—The Effects produced by the Reformation and the Revolution upon Political Principles—The Conduct of the Whig Party—The Character of the modern Democrats.

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TO THE READER.

THE following pages make part of what was intended as a Preface to a Work now in hand: But the Author having been gradually led into many reflections which are of a temporary nature, and ſome of them ſuch as may be thought not quite ſuited to the temper and gravity of the Work to which they were to be prefixed, he gives them to the Public as a Pamphlet; and if his manner of treating the ſubject of our Government and Laws ſhould be approved, the preſent ſheets may be followed by more.

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TO THE

QUIET GOOD SENSE

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

I ADDRESS myſelf to you in that temper of mind, which is produced when we contemplate what may be conſidered as the cauſe of all the happineſs we enjoy in this country.

Good sense is ſaid to be worth all learning and all ſcience; and it is believed that, among other diſtinctions which we poſſeſs, in this Iſland, above the Nations around us, we poſſeſs a great portion of this excellent quality, through all ranks of ſociety, from the higheſt to the loweſt. I declare myſelf one, who aſſents to this belief. Should any of the modern philoſophers, or politicians, think this declaration too aſſuming and illiberal, and that

too little is allowed for the endowments and qualifications of the reſt of mankind, my anſwer is this; That I have not yet ſeen equal marks of Good Senſe in thoſe matters where of all others they ſhould be manifeſted, I mean in their Laws and Government. In the next place, I am not a *Citizen of the World*, ſo as to divide my affection with ſtrangers—I am an Engliſhman—and I thank God for having placed me among a People who, I think, poſſeſs more goodneſs of heart and more GOOD SENSE than any other in the world, and who are the happieſt, becauſe they make the beſt uſe of both.

WHEN our happineſs ſo much depends upon the exerciſe of GOOD SENSE, how kind has Providence been in beſtowing this valuable quality ſo generally through all ranks of People! It is to be found among the middling and ordinary claſſes as much as among the higher; depending leſs upon the helps of education than the original frame and temperature of the mind. It is uſually diſtinct from the faculties that make moſt ſhow and attract notice; it manifeſts itſelf in conduct rather than diſcourſe; it is not what a man ſays, ſo much as what he does. In ſuch a ſphere as this, how many can act without ſeeming to be employed; and what effects may be produced without any one appearing to be in motion!

It is in ſuch quiet unperceived movements that the GOOD SENSE of the Country performs moſt of its operations, and exerciſes its influence on the conduct of public men and the national affairs. How often have we ſeen deſigns opened with high expectation, ſet off with great appearance of argument and much ornament of ſpeech! How have we ſeen parties combine; all their power of numbers, and all their arts of confederation brought into action! meeting after meeting! all the ſtirrers and all the talkers at work! no doubt of accompliſhing their object! no ſuſpicion that anything could oppoſe them! and how have all theſe mighty doings been baffled, and ſcattered into air, without our ſeeing the hand that has deſtroyed them.

It is the GOOD SENSE of the Country that has done this; it is you who have confounded the builders in their mad work, and have diſperſed them; one of them you have admoniſhed, another you have reprehended, another you have frowned down; all of them you have diſcountenanced and diſcredited; and behold! the leader and the led find no longer ſtrength in their numbers; their arguments appear to have no reaſon, and their oratory no charms to miſlead.

THUS we generally find, that whatever actors may be on the ſtage, and whatever piece may be propoſed, nothing can be brought to a ſucceſsful concluſion unleſs it is approved by the GOOD SENSE of the Country; which, though it diſcovers itſelf in a QUIET way, is very rarely without effect.

BEING ſenſible of the final deciſion YOU, fortunately for us, poſſeſs in all public matters, and wiſhing publickly to own and ſhew my reverence for the gentle and uſeful ſway which you enjoy, and I hope will always maintain in this nation, I have addreſſed to you theſe Thoughts upon the nature of our *Government*, which is now faſhionably called, *The Conſtitution*. If my thoughts ſhould be agreeable to YOUR GOOD SENSE, I ſhall not doubt of their being founded on principles that are ſound, and truly Engliſh.

THE peculiarities of the Engliſh character are diſcernible in nothing more than in the Laws and Government which they have gradually formed to themſelves. Theſe in their frame and quality, are entirely our own; and it is for want of our habit of thinking, that foreigners, who have ſtudied them and are diſpoſed enough to admire them, do not yet comprehend their true value. We admire the ſame things, but not in the ſame manner, nor upon the ſame motive, nor with the ſame view.

Thus,

Thus, an Engliſhman loves *liberty*, but he loves it not for the ſake of the mere name; he muſt have ſomething ſubſtantial that reſults from it; ſomething that he can ſee and feel: this he has in the freedom of his perſon, and the ſecurity of his property. An Engliſhman, therefore, thinks more of his *civil* than his *political* Liberty; more of the end than the means: the conſequences of the former are always before him, and he feels it to be truly the Liberty he needs; the other is only an occaſional reſource, a neceſſary evil, and he ſees that the exerciſe of it too frequently tends to private licentiouſneſs and public diſorder.

An Engliſhman is more *jealous* of Power, than ambitious to partake of it. Thus he ſeeks not to domineer over his neighbours, but he will take good care, that they ſhall not domineer over him. This jealouſy diſpoſes him more towards a *Monarchical* than a *Republican* Government; for he will bear with the ſuperiority of thoſe who are his ſuperiors, but he will not brook, that his equals ſhould be placed over him; and he feels that the protection which his *civil* Liberty has under the one ſort of Government, is a greater bleſſing than all the ſway and honours that he may chance to attain from the full exerciſe of *political* Liberty in the other.

These qualities of the mind are joined with another, which has been noticed, and has sometimes raised a sneer among foreigners. An Englishman has a natural *modesty*, which is not unmixed with a quiet, reserved, unassuming *pride*. These dispose him to conform to subordination, and to respect rank and station: his modesty inclines him to yield that, which established custom demands, and his pride will not allow him to assume what belongs to another. The native disposition of Englishmen, therefore, brings about imperceptibly that, which in other countries is prescribed by positive institutions; I mean the distinction of Ranks. But we possess this convenient modification of Society in a manner that is seen in no other country; for the distinction of ranks with us makes no difference of persons; we have no *privileged* Orders; and yet there are none of us who do not yield proper deference to distinguished rank.——In no country, perhaps, is Nobility more esteemed and honoured; and yet certainly, when we consider what Nobility bestows on its possessors, in no country can it strike less awe, or need be less feared. We concede readily to them that respect which we have the power to withhold; we unite in upholding the honour and influence of the higher ranks out of courtesy, and from a love of decorum;

rum; perhaps alſo from a conſciouſneſs that many of us aſpire, and a knowledge that all of us may by poſſibility attain, to a participation of it, from ſteady exertions and virtuous conduct.

This generoſity in the middle and lower orders of life is not received by the Great without acknowledgment and return. To ſay nothing of the relative ſituation of the Nobleman and the Gentleman (where the fameneſs of education and habits of life will not ſuffer any eſſential diſtinction of manners and ſentiment), we ſeem, from the very higheſt to the very loweſt in the nation, to confeſs that there is a native unalterable temper and conſtitution of mind which belongs to us all in common; we expreſs it by two ſhort words * that are at length become endeared to us; expreſſing, as we all think, that original indelible character of an Engliſhman; which the firſt Nobleman is proud to profeſs he enjoys, but enjoys only in common with the meaneſt of his tradeſmen, his tenants, or his ſervants. This is a ſentiment that makes us love and reſpect one another. The want of this in France, where the Nobility and Gentry hated or deſpiſed thoſe beneath them, as a diſtinct race of men, was the

* John Bull

cauſe

cauſe that they firſt placed barriers of ſeparation, which made an inequality that was invidious; and afterwards, in their rage to cure the miſchief of ſuch a ſeparation, levelled all to an equality that is more deteſtable than their former diſtinctions. This feeling of a congenial equality among us, is a philoſophy that is the growth of this Iſland. Its riſe is natural, not forced; it is a philoſophy that comes from the heart, and not from the head. It has been generated by a common conſent, not impoſed by hot-headed ſpeculators; and I truſt it will have the power to preſerve us by indiſſoluble bands of union, when the artificial ſchemes of philoſophizing Politicians are buried in oblivion.

But, above all things, an Engliſhman loves *Quiet.*—*Gives us peace in our time*—is the language of his prayers, and the ſilent wiſh of his heart. How many virtues does this ſingle diſpoſition oblige him to practiſe! It is from hence that he is patient and forbearing towards his Governors; not captious and wilful, but ſeeking the faireſt conſtruction of what they do; aſcribing to them the ſame honeſty of intention which he feels in his own mind. And, ſhould his jealouſy once be excited, he will bear and forbear for a time, ſtill hoping that things may mend. He knows the value

value of what he poſſeſſes better, than lightly or haſtily to wiſh for a change, and he dreads every change may be for the worſe. What ſtorms and convulſions have been eſcaped by the prevalence of this love for *Peace* and *Quiet!* But the more immediate conſequence of it is this, that its kindred quality Good Sense has thus an interval left, to interpoſe its protecting influence, and conſider of ſuch remedies as may ſeem ſuited to the nature of the exiſting evil.

The Engliſh Government is an organ of public union and activity, which is adapted to the humour and mode of thinking of thoſe who were witneſſes to the formation of it, and who live under it. It appears to me, we may diſcern in the whole diſpoſition of it, the reſult of that conſtitution of mind which I have juſt aſcribed to our countrymen. Unambitious, and preferring the quiet and peace, which enables them to purſue their own affairs, to the power and ſplendor of managing thoſe of the public, the Engliſh yield a willing obedience to a Government not of their own chuſing: it is an Hereditary King, who bears all the burthen of Government, who is endued with all the power neceſſary to carry it on, and who enjoys all the honour and pre-eminence neceſſary to give ſplendor to ſo high a ſtation. It is the *King's Peace*, under

 which

which we enjoy the freedom of our perſons and the ſecurity of our property: he *makes*, and he *executes* the Laws, which contain the rules by which that peace is kept; and for this purpoſe, all officers, civil and military, derive their authority from him. Still further to ſtrengthen this all-powerful ſway, two qualities are added that ſeem to bring this Royal Sovereignty, as far as mortal inſtitutions can be, ſtill nearer to the Government of Heaven. Firſt, This Power is to have perpetual continuance—*the King never dies.*—Secondly, Such unbounded power ſhall be preſumed to be exerciſed with as eminent goodneſs; and it is accordingly held that—*the King can do no wrong*;—meaning, that his perſon is ſo ſacred that wrong ſhall never be imputed to him.

These are the original and main principles upon which the plain Engliſhman, full of honeſty and confidence, thinks he may reſt for the protection of his perſon and property. But human inſtitutions will ſwerve from their original deſign, and Engliſhmen will not always confide; jealouſies and fears ariſe, and thoſe muſt be appeaſed. The reaſonable jealouſy of an Engliſhman ſeems to be fully ſatisfied, when a qualification is annexed to the power in the King, firſt, of *making*, and ſecondly, of *executing* the Laws; by which his

ſubjects

ſubjects are admitted to participate in a ſhare of thoſe high truſts.

ACCORDINGLY, the King can *enact* no Laws without *the advice and conſent*, not only of *the Lords Spiritual and Temporal*, who are in ſome ſort counſellors of his own chuſing, but alſo of *the Commons in Parliament aſſembled*. And the jealouſy with regard to property has been ſuch, that in deviſing this meaſure the ſubject has ſuffered a guard to be put upon himſelf; for the *Commons*, who are to adviſe and conſent, are not the people at large, nor are they choſen by the people at large, but they are the *Knights*, *Citizens*, and *Burgeſſes*, who are reſpectively choſen in *Counties*, *Cities*, and *Boroughs*, by perſons of ſubſtance and ſufficiency, who may ſafely be truſted with the exerciſe of a charge where property is in queſtion.

IN this manner is the power of the King qualified in the *making* of Laws. His power in *executing* the Laws is qualified by joining Grand and Petty Juries, in the adminiſtration of Juſtice, with his Judges. To theſe two controuls on the power of the King, muſt be added a principle, which gives the Nation another ſecurity for the due exerciſe of the Kingly Power; for though the King can do no wrong, yet if wrong is done by the application of the King's

Power, as he never acts without advice, the perſon who adviſes ſuch application is reſponſible to the Law.

WITH the exception, therefore, of the advice and conſent of the Two Houſes of Parliament, and the interpoſition of Juries; the Government, and the adminiſtration of it in all its parts, may be ſaid to reſt wholly and ſolely on the King, and thoſe appointed by him. Thoſe two adjuncts of *Parliament* and *Juries* are ſubſidiary and occaſional; but the King's Power is a ſubſtantive one, always viſible and active. By his Officers, and in his name, every thing is tranſacted that relates to the peace of the Realm and the protection of the Subject. The Subject feels this, and acknowledges with thankfulneſs a ſuperintending ſovereignty, which alone is congenial with the ſentiments and temper of Engliſhmen. In fine, the Government of England is *a Monarchy*; the Monarch is the antient ſtock from which have ſprung thoſe goodly branches of the Legiſlature, the Lords and Commons, that at the ſame time give ornament to the Tree, and afford ſhelter to thoſe who ſeek protection under it. But theſe are ſtill only branches, and derive their origin and their nutriment from their common parent; they may be lopped off, and the Tree

is a Tree ſtill; ſhorn indeed of its honours, but not, like them, caſt into the fire. The Kingly Government may go on, in all its functions, without Lords and Commons: it has heretofore done ſo for years together, and in our times it does ſo during every receſs of Parliament; but without the King *his* Parliament is no more. The King, therefore, alone it is who neceſſarily ſubſiſts, without change or diminution: and from *him* alone we unceaſingly derive the protection of Law and Government.

SUCH are the Principles and Conſtitution of the Engliſh Government delivered down to us from our anceſtors; ſuch they can be demonſtrated to be from the inconteſtible evidence of hiſtory and records; and ſuch it is wiſhed they ſhould continue by nine tenths of the Nation.

BUT, notwithſtanding this great majority in favour of the Government, there have never been wanting perſons to find fault with it, decry its excellence, and do their endeavours to ſubvert it, and ſet up another in its place. Though ſuch perſons err againſt the plaineſt evidence, yet, all circumſtances conſidered, it is not to be wondered that differences of this ſort ſhould happen under a Government, whoſe beſt title is profeſſed to be,

its conformity to the principles of reaſon; it is not to be wondered that this, among other ſubjects, ſhould occaſionally become matter of ſpeculation, and be brought to the teſt which it ſo readily challenged. And, where liberty of ſpeech and of writing has been ſo invariably allowed, this ſpirit of diſcuſſion could not fail of ſpreading. Thus, from the beſt of motives, might the merits of our Laws and Government be brought in queſtion. Little miſchief could be dreaded from honeſt diſputations like this, and ultimately ſome benefit might be derived from the new lights, which frequent argumentation would be ſure of producing. The opponents, in ſuch controverſies, might be friendly to the Government equally with the defendants: differing in the means, and not in the end; in circumſtances, and not in the ſubſtance.

But the greater part of thoſe who have raiſed queſtions upon the merits of our Government, are certainly determined enemies to its fundamental principles; and amongſt theſe are ſome, who have moſt aſſumed the guiſe and affectation of great friends and favourers of *The Conſtitution*. That there ſhould be perſons of this deſcription is not much more to be wondered than that there ſhould be miſtaken friends of the deſcription before mentioned.

THE truth is, that all Engliſhmen are not of the ſtamp I have above ſuppoſed to belong to our Countrymen. But thoſe who bear a different mark ſeem to me to be influenced by a defect of mind, which I muſt conſider as an aberration from the national character and general diſpoſition of Engliſhmen. In theſe men, it is ſometimes the underſtanding, and ſometimes the will that has received a wrong bias; either their affections are hurried away by an impreſſion from ſtrong propenſities, that they think too well juſtified to need examination; or their underſtandings are ſo ſophiſticated by preconceived opinions, that they are unable to make a clear judgment of any thing that is to affect thoſe opinions: ſo that by the ſtrength of the will, or the weakneſs of the wit, they go on from error to error, and are almoſt always in a heat from the purſuit, and from the diſappointment attending it.

SUCH are thoſe men, who contrary to the genius of Engliſhmen, hate *peace* and *quiet*, and inſtead of repoſing themſelves confidently on the Government of the King, earneſtly ſeek to have a ſhare in it themſelves. Such men have uſually no calling of their own, or none that they attend, and they wiſh to make one for themſelves in the affairs of the public. Such are thoſe unbridled

ſpirits

ſpirits that hate all power but their own, and would cry down all rank and ſtation that they may riſe upon its downfall, leaving no inequality in the land but the wealth they appropriate from the ſpoil of the good and great; who would rather take the chance to become one of five hundred Republicans that govern by their ordinances, that is, by their own will, than continue the ſubjects of a King who governs by Law. It is not to be expected, that men blinded by paſſion, and ſtimulated to deſigns ſo contrary to the general bent of the Engliſh character, ſhould be influenced by any ſuggeſtions of that GOOD SENSE, which prevails ſo much with the reſt of their countrymen. Delivered over to a ſtate of reprobation, they act as totally bereaved of that ſpecies of ſaving and preventive grace, which interpoſes its admonitions ſo ſeaſonably, and ſo often reſcues us from the commiſſion of ſome folly or wickedneſs.

WHEN we find, amongſt a ſober and diſcreet people, a certain ſet with crazed brains and perverted underſtandings oppoſing their own conceits to the general inclination of the people, we are led to enquire what could have been the cauſe of ſuch a ſchiſm, whence the ſpirit originated, and what motives or encouragement could have conſpired to keep it up. And here I feel ſome conſolation

conſolation to be able to ſay, that although the diſpoſition to cavil at our Laws and Government, and to extol another ſyſtem, is a miſchief that has been cheriſhed and ſtrengthened by the malicious induſtry of many amongſt ourſelves; yet it is a weed of foreign original, tranſplanted by men who had ſuffered their minds to be captivated and corrupted by outlandiſh faſhions; and only adopted and cultivated here by perſons of a light or fanatical humour, addicted to paradox, infatuated with refinement, and fond of innovation.

It is from a nation whoſe national character is the very oppoſite to ours, that the ſeeds of this evil were borrowed, and then ſcattered in this iſland; a nation, which has made itſelf odious to Europe by its violence and fraud; always planning freſh hoſtility againſt its neighbours, either by arms and open war, or by fomenting internal commotions: and by ſuch baſe means this Nation has grown to a ſize and importance that the Great Diſpenſer of all things has not ſeen fit in his wiſdom to allow to thoſe, who confine themſelves within the ſacred bounds of juſtice, and propoſe nothing but the ſafety of themſelves and the peace of mankind;—a Nation, which the ſame juſt God has nevertheleſs at length puniſhed for its iniquities, by delivering them over to their own vain and wicked imaginations, ſo that they

might revenge upon themſelves the injuries of Europe, more by a thouſand fold, than all Europe itſelf could have done; and that they might become a ſcorn and by-word for every thing hateful and abominable among men:—a Nation ſo unfit for the enjoyment of liberty, that while they were kept in ſubjection to their Kings they had Religion and Laws, manners and refinement, and were admired and imitated by their neighbours; but, ſince they have broken from that reſtraint, and have recovered what they call Liberty, they have pulled down and aboliſhed all thoſe valuable ſupports of life, even to the very wreck of civilization itſelf. In *their* place, their Rulers have erected one mockery of a Conſtitution after another; haranguing daily upon Liberty, but exerciſing the moſt unexampled Oppreſſion; for Oppreſſion is ſtill the lot of a Frenchman. In a Republic of three years ſtanding, the greateſt exploit they have to boaſt is the deſtroying of a tyranny that filled upfift een months of the time. And who was this tyrant? Not a man on an eſtabliſhed throne, ſurrounded with guards, and abetted by powerful alliances and numerous friends and dependants; it was one of themſelves, who ſhewed himſelf daily among them, of the ſame order, upon the ſame form.

WHAT a counterfeit of Liberty has been played off upon the poor people of that country! and what a degenerate down-trodden race muſt they be, who have not diſcovered the impoſition; or, diſcovering it, have not reſiſted it, and done themſelves juſtice! this could not be, if there was any honeſty, any fortitude, or any manly ſentiment in the country; but theſe are not qualities to be found in France, and Liberty ſeems deſtined never to make her abode there. Men muſt be trained to Liberty; and a whole Nation cannot ſo eaſily practiſe it as a Committee of conceited Academicians can lay down definitions, and propound maxims for its eſtabliſhment. The mind and manners of a Frenchman need much purifying, before he can comprehend the Liberty he talks of with ſo much fluency and heat. Liberty is the reward of thoſe only who are juſt and good; and it is to be attained only by thoſe who have GOOD SENSE enough to underſtand it, and to uſe it with moderation.

BUT, although the French nation have miſcarried in the only attempt they ever made to eſtabliſh Liberty in their own country, they have, nevertheleſs, produced men, who in their writings have endeavoured to advance a *cauſe* which bore the appearance of it; and ſome, who have been

able actually to carry it into practice in other countries. In former times, those who fled from slavery at home became Apostles of Liberty abroad; and since the Nation has persuaded itself that the land is full of Liberty, the establishing a college for *propagating* their blessed doctrines in foreign countries, is nothing more than might be expected from the vainglory of a Frenchman. Be the times what they may, the Governments of Europe are still to be disturbed with the conceits of Frenchmen! Whether it is for Religious or Civil Liberty, they will never keep their inventions to themselves; they are determined, by preaching and proselyting, to bring all the world to conform to the new lights which they alone have discovered; and to insult the blindness and folly of those who resist their fraternization! From *Calvin* down to *Condorcet*, from *Beza* to *Brissot* (innovators in different matters, but alike in the self-sufficiency, heat, and imperiousness belonging to all Frenchmen), no true Gospel but theirs; no *Rights of Man* but theirs; no Government in *Church* or *State* but according to their *platform* and their principles.

We all know the destructive doctrines upon which the French Liberty of the present day is founded; and we see, with uneasiness, the pains

and

and the ſucceſs in propagating them in this Country. The infection has ſpread already too far; and, ſuch is the fatal ſeduction of thoſe principles, that they are too likely to work their way much further: their looſeneſs is likely to win to their ſide the diſſolute and immoral; their ſpeciouſneſs to enſnare the unwary and unprepared; men of bad principles find a comfort and ſupport in them; men of no principles know not how to combat them. Thus it has happened, that many of our countrymen, who had not ſtrongly impreſſed on their minds the National Character before deſcribed, have given themſelves up to theſe foreign deluſions, and have begun to apply them to the reforming and new-modelling of the antient Government eſtabliſhed in this Land by the wiſdom and experience of our forefathers.

Such is the *preſent* novelty from France! We may learn from Hiſtory what was the nature of the principles which *Calvin* and *Beza*, and their followers at Geneva, inſtilled into the *Puritans*, who infeſted our Government in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and who, under the name of *Preſbyterians*, *Commonwealth's-men*, *Independents*, and other factions and ſects without number, at length overturned firſt the Government of Scotland, and afterwards the Government of England.

Upon examination we ſhall find a ſimilar ſpirit prevailing in the French principles of thoſe days, and of the preſent times.

It would be curious to purſue the compariſon that ſometimes makes a contraſt, and ſometimes a parallel, between the character and deſigns of the French Reformers of old time in the Church, and thoſe of the preſent day in the State; the Religious and the Civil *Jacobins*; the *Puritans*, and the *Democrats*. It is wonderful how ſimilar they all are in their doctrines, and how they agree in the ſyſtem and the inſtruments they uſe for diſſeminating their principles, for gaining proſelytes, and for *carrying on* the unhallowed *work* of ſetting the populace againſt the eſtabliſhed Government. How analogous was the machinery of their party; the cant and impoſture of their pretences!—— The unalienable rights of the People to form the Government of the Church, taught by *Calvin* and the *Puritans*; and the unalienable right of the People to form the Government of the State, taught by the *French Democrats*:——The pretended commands of God for the one; and that omnipotent power upon earth, the Sovereign Will of the People commanding the other.—— What is "The ſword of the Lord and of Gideon" but the modern title to the holy right of inſurrection?

rection? View the Covenants and Engagements of the one, the Civic Oaths of the other; both alike ſworn, and broken and re-ſworn;—the hypocriſy of Solemn Faſts, and the mummery of Civic Feaſts;—the Claſſes and Conventicles of the one, and the Affiliated Clubs of the other;—the Pulpit, and the Tribune——preaching down, or lecturing down the Government;—affected appellations of Brethren and Citizens;—and, laſtly, the ſpring of action that is the cauſe of motion in the two, the Fanaticiſm of thoſe who had too much ſenſe of Religion, and the illumination and New Lights of the latter, who have no Religion at all.

In making this compariſon, I have taken the liberty to mix together the character and proceedings of the French abroad, as well as of their diſciples in this country; it is all a part and reſult of the ſame ſyſtem. The firſt French Reformers, and their followers in this Country, proclaimed a Church Government, which was the invention of *Calvin*'s brain, as commanded by God, and as impoſing upon every one the obligation to overturn the eſtabliſhed Church Government, and erect this in its place; ſuch was the impudence and profanation of the *Puritans*. The modern French Reformers declare all Government

ment to be uſurpation which is not formed by the will of the People; and that the People have an impreſcriptible right to ſubvert ſuch Government and make another according to their own will and pleaſure; ſuch are the imperious pretenſions of the *Jacobins*. The principles of the *Puritans* and the *Jacobins* equally tend to ſedition and rebellion, and equally ſtrike us with terror: the one reſted its ſupport on the greateſt Power in Heaven, and the other depends upon the greateſt Power on Earth: the witneſſes vouched for theſe high demands, ſeem to be equally ſuſpicious in both; they are to be found nowhere but in the inſcrutable ways of their own minds; in their own ſtrong perſuaſions, dazzled by vain imaginations, and ſtrengthened by the confirmation of ſelf-will.

In order to ſee the manner in which French principles have inſinuated themſelves into this Iſland, and vitiated the plain honeſty of the Engliſh character, it will be neceſſary to look back to ſome occurrences in our Hiſtory. We ſhall then ſee what pretences have been uſed, from time to time, to bring our antient Laws and Government into diſcredit, and to corrupt their genuine principles with notions introduced from abroad, and no leſs foreign in their nature than their original.

It ſeems to me, that moſt of the errors and miſconceptions relative to the nature of our Government, have taken their riſe from thoſe two great events, *The Reformation*, and what is called *The Revolution*. There has either been ſome diſſatisfaction with the manner and extent of thoſe two meaſures, or ſome miſapprehenſion of their deſign, or a want of inſight into the grounds and principles of the ſubject matter, namely, the Government in Church and State.

Those memorable tranſactions were conducted in a way that was truly Engliſh; the actors in them proceeded with their remedy as far as the diſeaſe reached, and no further; and they never ſuffered themſelves to loſe ſight of this main rule, that what they did was to preſerve the antient Government, and not to deſtroy or alter it.

By the Reformation, it was intended to remove thoſe errors and ſuperſtitions that had gradually been introduced into the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church by the Popiſh Clergy; ſo that Chriſtianity might be profeſſed in that purity and ſimplicity which prevailed in the primitive ages. At the ſame time, occaſion was taken to put an end to the long-conteſted claim of the Pope to exerciſe eccleſiaſtical dominion over the King's

ſubjects in this kingdom. The whole of that uſurped juriſdiction was expreſsly and completely taken away by Act of Parliament; and that juriſdiction, firſt under the name of *Headſhip*, and then of *Supremacy in all Eccleſiaſtical Matters*, was placed by the ſame authority in the King. The Church was thus faſt bound to the Monarchy; and this union of all authority, eccleſiaſtical as well as civil, in the Crown, it was hoped, beſides placing Religion out of danger, would make a common cauſe between Church and State, would produce mutual advantages to both, and give to the antient pillar of the Government, the Crown, new ſtrength and ſplendor for the protection of the ſubject.

THUS much and no more ſeems to have been the ſum of what was done and deſigned to be done by the Reformation. The firſt obſervation that is ſuggeſted by this event is, upon the wonderful moderation that ſeems to have prevailed through the whole. It is a maſter-piece of temper and good ſenſe, and will ever remain an example, among ſeveral others, of the great wiſdom ſhewn by our Churchmen, and the ſervices they have done, at different times, towards preſerving our antient Government.

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The conduct and success of our Reformation becomes more striking when we look abroad and take a view of the proceedings of our neighbours in the same sort of work. A spirit of dissatisfaction had spread in France on the subject of Popish superstitions. According to the disposition for caballing and proselyting so remarkable in that people, opinions engendered in France were soon preached and propagated at Geneva, and through the Seventeen Provinces of the Netherlands; countries still destined to be infested either by French arms, or by French principles, which generate internal distractions that are worse than war. In all these countries, except in France itself, the people took the affair of Reformation into their own hands, and, proceeding in the only way of reforming understood by them, they began to pull down and overturn every thing that had been established in the Church; believing that nothing could be primitive Christianity that was not wholly opposite to the system which they had been used to, and was now condemned. These commotions were suppressed in some of the Provinces; but in the others, and at Geneva, they became the actual ground-work of the Reformation that was afterwards settled.

The Biſhop and Clergy of Geneva, like many others of their order, had fled, to eſcape the fury of the populace. At this criſis, the French refugee *Calvin* happening to come to that town was choſen by the people to be their paſtor. Having once got a footing, he ſucceeded, not without ſome viciſſitudes, and through many a ſhift and artifice, to eſtabliſh and maintain to his death over the people who raiſed him, an aſcendancy which they neither liked nor dared to ſhake off. From this time, Geneva became the ſchool for teaching the new opinions in doctrine and Church government; and during the unfortunate interval of perſecution in the reign of Queen Mary, many of our exiled Reformers took up their reſidence in that place, and there imbibed thoſe notions which afterwards wrought ſo much confuſion and miſery in this Iſland.

As *Calvin* came into power on no authority but that of the people, he could form his Church government upon no other than popular principles. He joined, therefore, two elders with the Miniſter, and gave to theſe parochial officers ſupreme authority in all Church matters, without appeal, except in ſpecial caſes: and thus he ſubjected the whole community of a pariſh to the direction of three perſons, two of them laymen of an ordinary

ſtamp, who were likely to ſubmit their judgment in moſt things to the guidance of their ſpiritual aſſociate. This ſpecies of Government was profeſſed to be ſuch as God had commanded for the government of his Church, and ſuch as all were bound in conſcience to ſet up, againſt all oppoſition, whether from Magiſtrates, Biſhops, or Kings.

When this popular baſis for Church government had once taken full poſſeſſion of the mind, it was not likely ſoon to ceaſe fermenting. The work of Reformation is very apt to overheat thoſe who are engaged in it; the bold ſpirit of ſuch *projectors* grows bolder as they go on; every ſucceſs gives new courage; and if they have the ſtrong hand of the people to ſecond them, what ſhould ſtop their ambitious deſigns. We accordingly find, that the *French* Reformers of the Church ſoon undertook to ſearch into the title of the Civil Magiſtrate, and examine by what authority and upon what truſt he exerciſed his power. They ſoon told him, that the origin of all power was from the People; and they began to threaten Sovereign Princes with the ſame tremendous ſtorm which had been blown up againſt the Biſhops. Indeed, they did not open this attack without well knowing what they had to depend upon. The populace (who upon ſuch occaſions are called the People) were a monſter which

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these Ministers had in their own tuition and keeping; they knew they could work upon their fanatical fancies as served their purpose; could heat them and cool them, unbridle and bridle them, as they pleased. In this manner did a new set of opinions start up to shake the peace of society; and Civil Authority was once more exposed to be undermined by the plots and confederations of Churchmen, carrying on their work under the pretence of religion.

The Princes of Europe had weathered the storms that used to be directed against them from the Papal Throne; and the thunder of excommunication or deprivation no longer daunted the Prince, because the People no longer thought it a pretence for rebellion: but the new opinions gave more alarm than any danger that had been escaped. The People were now tempted to rebellion, not because their Prince was excommunicated, and the Pope authorised them so to do, but because they believed themselves the origin of all Civil Authority. So long as Man loves himself, and is fond of his own will and imaginations, so long will he listen with gratification to such doctrines. These *puritanical* notions give a zest to sedition and a title to rebellion which could never be discovered in any Papal Bull; and accordingly, wherever they

they were brought into action, they were accompanied with a rage and ferociousneſs that is peculiar to Fanaticiſm, whether in a *Puritan* or a *Jacobin*.

These notions upon Civil Government are to be found in the writings of *Calvin* and *Beza*, and in thoſe of *Buchannan*, *John Knox*, *Cartwright*, and others of the Geneva Diſcipline, who choſe to make this Iſland the Theatre for acting ſome of their Tragedies.

The praiſe of moderation and wiſdom before beſtowed on the Engliſh Reformers I cannot help repeating here, when I turn my eyes to the ſad confuſion cauſed in the ſiſter kingdom by a contrary conduct. Unhappily, the people there took into their own hands the affair of Reformation, and it was performed to a degree of ſubverſion and anarchy, that could only be ſuggeſted by fanaticiſm, and executed by popular fury. More unhappily for that country, and ultimately for this, the ſeditious ſpirit then infuſed by *Puritaniſm* was not allayed for many years after; during which the *Preſbyterians* in Scotland had an opportunity, by co-operating with their brethren in this kingdom, to become the principal cauſe of the rebellion in the time of Charles the Firſt, which

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led to aboliſhing, firſt the Church Ceremonies and Government by Biſhops (the immediate object of all their deteſtation), and afterwards the Houſe of Lords and the King, who, I firmly believe, will in no times be able long to ſurvive the firſt breach made in the fabric of Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Government.

In the midſt of the confuſion and anarchy that reigned in the neighbouring countries where Reformation was going on, the Church of England had reaſon to congratulate herſelf that this great work had been accompliſhed with all the forms of law in a parliamentary way, and that ſhe was united with the intereſts of the Crown in ſuch manner as to claim the full ſupport of the Civil Power, if aſſailed by enemies; and further ſhe might comfort herſelf, that her reforms were ſo temperate, and ſo compatible with all the eſſentials of the late ſtate of the Church, that her enemies would be few, and thoſe few would have little ſtrength of reaſon for maintaining their oppoſition. For ſeveral years of the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign the Church enjoyed peace, notwithſtanding the Papiſt *was ſtill in the land.*

But now was the time for a new adverſary to appear, more implacable and politic than even the

the Papiſt, and one too ſprung from the boſom of Reformation itſelf. Many of the Engliſh who had ſuffered their minds to be infected with Calviniſtical opinions during their reſidence in Geneva and in the Low Countries, began, about the year 1572, to complain of our Reformation as incomplete; and from that time men of this perſuaſion never ceaſed, by their writings and conduct, to manifeſt the moſt violent diſlike of our Church, and to profeſs openly their wiſh and deſign to overturn it and ſet up the diſcipline of Geneva in its place. Doctrines like theſe were very alarming, becauſe they were levelled not only againſt the Biſhops, who were a conſiderable part of the Legiſlature, but againſt the ſupremacy ſo lately united to the Crown. Such is the effect of all extremes, that the Calviniſtical Church, no leſs than the Popiſh, aſſumed to itſelf to be independent of the Civil Magiſtrate, and thus threatened to revive all the inconvenience of a power in the Church diſtinct from that of the State; an *imperium in imperio* ſo ill brooked in the Pope; and the ſettling of which in the Crown was thought to be one of the happieſt ſtrokes in the Reformation. In this point of the Supremacy they were therefore joined by the Papiſts, and both parties thought their objections particularly ſtrengthened at that time, from the circumſtance

of the Throne being filled by a Woman. But though the Crown was, in this particular, assailed by both parties, and although the *Puritans*, in other respects, never ceased heaping upon their brother Non-Conformists, the Papists, every odium that could be invented, and endeavoured, by keeping up this cry, to draw off the attention of the Government from their own designs, they were, nevertheless, regarded all through the remainder of this reign, by those who, it appears since, saw farthest into human affairs, as the faction most of all to be dreaded, on account of their principles, and the activity, perseverance, and system with which they promoted them.

The high pretensions of this *new discipline* did not pass without most complete answers in point of argument. The writings of *Whitgift*, of *Bancroft*, and more particularly of *Hooker*, had so fully examined and confuted every argument alledged for the proposed Reformation, and so exposed the pernicious tendency of the new doctrines, and the dangerous designs which the authors of them meditated, and which they had actually begun to put in practice, that they were completely silenced by the end of this reign; so that at the commencement of the next reign, in the conference at Hampton Court, held in the presence

preſence of King James, they could make no ſhow of defence whatſoever.

But though the *Puritans* were ſo foiled in argument, they did not, on that account, relinquiſh their purpoſe. The failure, indeed, in the conference, ſeemed to have this effect, that they no longer pretended to force their diſcipline into notice upon any open and bold claim of merit in its favour, but thenceforward rather confined themſelves to raiſing and keeping up a cry about the increaſe of Papiſts and the danger of Popery. In the mean while, they loſt no time ſilently to improve every opportunity for ſpreading their opinions, and adding to the number of their diſciples and partizans.

During the reign of James and Charles the Firſt, other matter of public diſſatisfaction aroſe, which the *Puritans* could manage with better face than their own eccleſiaſtical pretenſions; and if they could work any political differences up to a pitch of general diſcontent, and ſo to reſiſtance againſt the Government, their end would be equally ſerved, and their darling object might ſtand a chance of being attained without directly contending for it. It is well known, that both in Parliament and out of Parliament the moſt forward to quarrel with the meaſures of Government,

and to foment contention between the Crown and the People, were thoſe infected with *Puritanical* opinions. This conteſt went on from bad to worſe, till the plot was thoroughly matured, and the whole broke out into full-blown rebellion in the year 1641. This was not brought to bear till the Scots army of *Preſbyterian Covenantors* was prevailed upon to invade the kingdom, and our Houſe of Commons recognized and received with open arms their *Puritanical Brethren;* then the *Covenant* was taken univerſally by the Parliament and all its adherents; the long-looked-for time was arrived, when *Calvin*'s plan of Church government—*Preſbytery by Divine Right*—was to be erected on the ruins of Epiſcopacy; and it was accordingl ſo ordained by the Parliament.

We all know what followed; and the calamities endured by the unhappy people for near twenty years, till the Country, worn out with projects of one Government after another, in none of which was found ſecurity of property, freedom of perſon, or the peace and quiet it ſo much ſighed after, at length recovering its good ſenſe and former energy, returned to the place whence it had ſo fatally departed, and cauſed, without bloodſhed or a blow, the antient Government of Monarchy to be reſtored in 1660.

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Such were the viciſſitudes and cataſtrophe attending the firſt ſet of *French opinions* introduced into this kingdom, for the purpoſe of diſparaging, undermining, and ſubverting the Conſtitution of our Government eſtabliſhed by law. They ſet out with a frivolous exception to Caps and Surplices worn by Miniſters in performance of Divine Service; they proceeded to cavil at the government of the Church by Biſhops, and at placing that Supremacy in the Crown, which ought, as they contended, to reſide in the Parſon of the pariſh and his two Lay elders. Not being able to advance this by argument, or win the people to a liking of the deſign, they reſerved themſelves to take advantage of every occaſion to public diſcontent, and became the moſt forward Patriots of the time; till they were enabled, under pretence of the general good, for preſerving the People's rights and maintaining the good old laws of the country, as they ſaid, to deſtroy all ranks and ſtations in Church and State; to levy war againſt the King, for the protection, as they pretended, of the King's perſon; and, finally, to deſtroy him: all which they tranſacted under various denominations of *Preſbyterians*, *Independents*, *Commonwealth's men*, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Quakers*, and other ſects and diviſions too irkſome to be named; all of them, more or leſs, diſciples of the ſame

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ſchool; where the Sovereignty of the people and the Killing of Kings was firſt brought into ſyſtem, and ſanctioned by the dictates of the Goſpel.

THE abdication of King James the Second, and the tranſactions that enſued upon the vacancy thereby made in the Throne, compoſe a very important and curious paſſage in the Hiſtory of our Government and Laws. It has been vulgarly called, *The Revolution;* upon what authority I know not; it was not ſo named by Parliament, nor is it a term known to our Laws. This term had certainly no better origin than the converſation and pamphlets of the time, where words are uſed, in a popular and hiſtorical ſenſe, without any regard or thought of technical propriety. But, unfortunately, this invention, or miſapplication of words, leads to a confuſion of ideas; knowledge is thereby put into a retrograde courſe; inſtead of going from things to words, we are obliged to paſs from words to things: let the term *Revolution* be once conſecrated as the true denomination of that event, and the mind aſcribes to that tranſaction every thing which it can conceive to belong to the term. Too many among us uſe the word in ſome ſuch indeterminate general ſenſe, and ſuch perſons are accordingly miſled by notions that have no ſort of connexion with the

the thing of which they are ſpeaking: and yet it is remarkable, that thoſe who embrace this phantom do it with a zeal and prepoſſeſſion which we do not ſee in thoſe who regard the ſubſtance and reality. Theſe men think they can never ſhew ſufficient warmth and emotion when they name *The Revolution;* they form Clubs to ſwear by, and worſhip it; they make great feaſts to celebrate it; they have no love for *The Conſtitution* but for that which was *formed at the Revolution;* and they are good ſubjects and loyal, only upon *Revolution principles.*

WHAT can be the cauſe of this mighty zeal? Whence does it originate, and to what does it tend?—This beloved Revolution happened more than a century ago; ſo that all the heat which naturally attends ſuch a criſis, and which may be kept up while it was recent, muſt have long ſince cooled and died away. No one can ſay, that any of the cauſes which produced that event, have recurred in our time, ſo as to remind us of the remedies our anceſtors applied on that occaſion, All this earneſt demonſtration of affection and devotion, without any apparent cauſe or occaſion. is either ridiculous affectation, or ſignifies ſomething that is not obvious to perſons of common underſtandings. For we may aſk them, Who has

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cenſured or cavilled at thoſe proceedings, that ſhould move theſe perſons ſo violently to defend or extol them? And we may further aſk, Who beſides themſelves ſay or think any thing about them? They are recorded in our Statute Book, like other matters of equal importance, and are the objects of ſerious ſtudy and contemplation; precedents that are regarded with reverence and with gratitude towards thoſe who made them, but which we hope never to have occaſion to follow. Theſe are the ſentiments which are ſuggeſted by GOOD SENSE on the view of theſe valuable memorials; and as they are never thought of without ſome mixture of concern and pain, we are always glad to lay them aſide, and we rarely wiſh to recall them.

BUT what manner of men muſt they be who make this a ſubject for Tavern Meetings, for congratulation, and for frivolous feſtivity! a ſubject to declaim, to combine, to run ſtark mad upon! However, they know their meaning, and there are very few of us who do not know their meaning alſo. All this wondrous paſſion is excited by the *idea* of a Revolution; what they *idolize* is a *Revolution in the abſtract;* and *theſe Revolution* principles are the only ideas they profeſs of our Conſtitution.

But we muſt not expect men to be ſo void of caution as to avow ſuch a motive; *they* pretend nothing more than the ſame event which we all mean; and, upon ſuch a conſideration, *they* think themſelves juſtified ſufficiently in all they ſay and do. To repeat nothing here of the folly in ſuch effervescence of zeal, I wonder, conſidering the rank and ſtation of ſome of theſe perſons, that a ſenſe of good-breeding and decorum has never ſuggeſted to them that ſo much commemoration of that Revolution, repeatedly urged out of all ſeaſon and meaſure, cannot ſound agreeably in the ears of the Sovereign. To him, ſuch commemoration muſt convey ſome inſinuation of reproach. I know, ſome who have had qualms of this ſort, have excuſed themſelves by alledging that *The Hanover Succeſſion* aroſe in conſequence of the *Revolution.*

But with the good leave of theſe Gentlemen, the way for *them* to manifeſt ſuch ſentiments would be expreſsly to commemorate *The Hanover Succeſſion;* for which I never heard that, in all their zeal, they had formed one Club, or made one dinner. And it does not look well, that when they are gratifying their own prejudices and prepoſſeſſions in poſitive and plain terms, they ſhould compliment their Sovereign only by circumlocution, and leave him to make it out himſelf, as he can, by collection and inference.

SUPPOSE, for a moment, that ſome Patriot ſhould, among the eſtates that he has not yet been obliged to ſell, poſſeſs one that came to his anceſtor from the favour of the Crown (which is no obſtacle to the deſcendants being Patriots), and that this eſtate had come to the Crown, as perhaps it may again, by forfeiture for high treaſon; if ſome wag of a tenant ſhould collect a noiſy meeting in the village to celebrate there the virtue of *forfeiture and confiſcation for treaſon*, and alledge a reaſon like the above, I doubt whether the circumlocution would give much reliſh to the joke in the mind of the ſaid Patriot. But it is not for men of a popular diſpoſition to do by others as they would be done by; they are men who do no right and take no wrong; men who reap where they ſow not. Like the Patriots of former times, the godly *Puritans*, *they* have a privilege peculiar to themſelves, that diſpenſes with the obligations which bind ordinary perſons, who are not *of the Brethren*.

BUT though the term *Revolution* throws confuſion on the nature of the event it is meant to denote, it muſt yet be confeſſed, that it is not wholly without analogy to the circumſtances attending it. As this term is of a comprehenſive and looſe import, and of a capacity for the worſt

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men to find their own meaning in it, ſo that event, which was brought about by the energy, good ſenſe, and firmneſs, of ſome of the beſt and greateſt men in the Nation, was of a nature (unlike moſt good things) to be helped on by the concurrence and approbation of ſome of the worſt men that could be found. But there was this difference between the two deſcriptions of agents; what was merit in the one claſs of men was none in the other. Thoſe who loved the antient Government, and knew the value of Monarchy, had great prepoſſeſſions to ſacrifice before they could take ſuch a ſtep, though for the preſervation of both, and though they knew that on the preſervation of both depended their Laws and Liberties. But the reſt, who had no partiality for Monarchy, or who were ignorant or careleſs of its value; the *Republican*, the *Preſbyterian*, and the *Sectaries*, to whom may be added a long train of the abandoned and diſſolute; nothing was more eaſy to them than to join in any thing that looked like ſucceſsful rebellion. Thoſe who hated the very frame of the Government could not but be pleaſed with the ſhock it now received: ſome hoped that the change might lead to other innovations; thoſe who had been uſed to pull down and deſtroy, gladly ſaw a proſpect of reviving their old trade; perſons without a determinate

object were yet too much amuſed with novelty not to be on the ſide of the authors of it.

WHATEVER were their motives for joining in the new ſettlement, the *Republicans*, *Preſbyterians*, and *Sectaries*, did not fail ſoon afterwards to urge their merit, and it muſt be confeſſed not without ſome ſhow of reaſon. It was a fortunate criſis to them; they now ſaw a Government which they had a hand in rearing; they thought they ſhould no longer be regarded with jealouſy and ſuſpicion; and they hoped now to make themſelves a party *in* the State, inſtead of being conſidered as a party *againſt* it. Bending all their endeavours to this point, the firſt thing to be done was to get a good name. For this purpoſe, they took their ſtand among *The Whigs*: under the pretence of that way of thinking, they began to vent their political opinions; which, however, they now ſo tampered and turned as to adapt them to the Government eſtabliſhed by Law. As they ſacrificed the rigour of their own notions, they did not fail to take a ſimilar liberty with the principles of the Government; and ſo they have gone on, from thoſe times to our own, corrupting the genuine principles of the Engliſh Laws and Government, in order to ſuit them to their own theories and ſyſtems, till they have filled the whole with uncertainty;

uncertainty; and *The Conſtitution*, of which they are ſo inceſſantly debating, is made one of the moſt doubtful and difficult things to comprehend.

To theſe men, and to this ſiniſter deſign, we are indebted for the jargon of which I have juſt complained. *They* invented the term *Revolution*, to blind and miſlead; and they have never ceaſed repeating it, that they may put the People in mind of making another. This myſtery they have couched under the ſtill more looſe metaphyſical idea of *Revolution principles*; and by the glorious ſpell of—*The Conſtitution*—they can conjure up any form, faſhion, modification, reform, change, or innovation in Government they pleaſe, and it ſhall ſtill be nothing more, as they pretend, than the genuine true Engliſh Conſtitution.

The term *Conſtitution* has nothing in itſelf objectionable: a plain man might receive it without ſuſpicion of any miſchievous implication lurking under it. It might be underſtood as a ſhort way of ſpeaking for—*The Conſtitution of the Government*. But thoſe who introduced this mode of expreſſion were men famous for doing nothing without deſign. That deſign was noted very early by perſons whoſe ears had been habituated to the proper language of our Engliſh Government.

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It appeared to them, according to the language of one of them, " that this new term Conſtitution " was commonly brought forward with a Repub- " lican face, as if it meant ſomewhat excluding " or oppoſite to the Monarchy, and carried an " inſinuation as of a co-ordination or coercion " of the Monarchy*."

THE tenor of almoſt every thing that has been written or ſaid by this claſs of men, from that time to the preſent, on the nature of this ſuppoſed *Conſtitution*, juſtifies the ſuſpicions then early entertained. We need only recur to a few particulars to eſtabliſh and illuſtrate this character of them.

IT is from perſons of this way of thinking that we have heard the following curious obſervation, that " ſo and ſo, it muſt be confeſſed, is not war- " ranted by Law, but it is certainly a part of the " Conſtitution." To what illuſions a man's mind muſt be a prey before he can be brought to ac- quieſce in ſuch folly! and how loſt muſt he be before he can have the boldneſs to vent it! I always thought, that it was the diſpoſition of Engliſhmen to require plain and defined ſentences for the Charter of their Rights and Liberties; that they claimed to have known, written,

* ROGER NORTH on the Engliſh Conſtitution.

and

and expreſs Laws to govern them; and that they regarded high pretenſions founded on viſionary and refined theories, as the air in which they were built: and I thought, that *the divine indefeaſible Right of Kings*, with other fancies of former times, were exploded principally, becauſe they were poſitions that had no warrant from the known expreſs Laws of the Land, but reſted on general reaſoning, from topics not known to the uſage and laws of the country: and I always believed, that the ſet of men who moſt clamoured againſt thoſe pretenſions, upon the very grounds here alledged, were thoſe who afterwards ſet up this new ſyſtem.

But it ſeems to me, that this new ſyſtem, giving origin to poſitions like that above mentioned, and ſo carrying the mind beyond the bounds of law equally with the other, is quite as abſurd as the former, and differs from it only in being much more miſchievous. For whereas the former attempted to raiſe the imagination to ſomething above us, which might ſooth and elevate the ſenſes; the latter opens to us no ſpace wherein the imagination can exerciſe itſelf, but the very gulph of Democracy, there to toil and turmoil, without hope of reſt or conſolation.

But as the Conſtitution was alledged, upon this ſyſtem, to be ſomething that differed from the

the Law and Government, it became neceſſary to have Profeſſors and Doctors to give reſponſes upon the nature of it, and direct our courſe in theſe untrodden paths. There accordingly ſtarted up a race of men called *Conſtitutional Lawyers*. I have heard it ſaid, that "ſuch a perſon is not "much verſed in the Law of Weſtminſter-Hall, "but he is nevertheleſs a very good Conſtitu-"tional Lawyer." As far as my obſervation goes, theſe Conſtitutional Lawyers ſeem to be divided into two claſſes. One of them conſiſts of Gentlemen who are bred indeed to the Law, but whoſe circumſtances are ſo competent that they are not obliged to make a livelihood of it; and as theſe Gentlemen need not torment their brains with the details neceſſary for the practice of Courts, they are at leiſure to extend the ſcope of their reading, and at liberty to take only the cream of their extended harveſt. As there is no compulſion, no preſſing ſtimulus to theſe purſuits, they are followed as it may happen; and the principal objects propoſed to themſelves by ſuch ſtudents, are uſually matters relative to the King and Parliament. Such perſons often attain the courteſy of being called *Conſtitutional Lawyers*; that is if they were ſentenced as ſeverely as I once heard *Gentlemanly Scholars*,—they are no Lawyers at all.

THE other claſs are of a very different ſort; they are really Lawyers; poſſeſſed of learning, experience, and parts, and, what is more, reſolved to make the moſt of them. Such perſons, having ſecured their footing at the Bar, and being tolerably certain of preſerving a lucrative practice, have nothing more to ſeek than preferment and rank. Theſe attach themſelves to ſome Party in Parliament, uſually in Oppoſition; they lend their name and credit to give ſtability to the pretenſions of their Party; and they are too often ready to maintain, with colour of Law, every thing that needs ſuch ſupport;—*and verily theſe men* uſually *have their reward.*

BUT the *Revolution* politicians are much better able to explain their own doctrines than any of their Conſtitutional Lawyers. A Gentleman of ſingular wit and conviviality, who from accident and circumſtances was, in ſpite of his nature, made a Patriot, could not refrain from letting out the ſecret. This Gentleman, I am ſure, ought to be looked upon as an authority; for he enjoyed a longer career of popularity, of more violent heat and univerſality; and his name was more frequently joined with Liberty, (even to the becoming a by-word), than the beſt of them, be his pretenſions what they may. This

Gentleman is ſaid to have favoured us with a definition of that which had before puzzled ſo many; he gave a definition of the Conſtitution. He ſays—*The Conſtitution is every thing that is not Law.* And though he ſeems to have gone a little too far, in confeſſing for others, as well as for himſelf, he has alſo given us his idea of the claſs of Lawyers of which we have juſt been ſpeaking: he frankly declared why he thought his learned friend and colleague, who was a great Conſtitutional Lawyer, ſo able and ſo valuable: "I think him," ſays he, "the beſt Lawyer in "Weſtminſter-Hall; for he will make that to "be Law which I want to be ſo." And ſo much for *Conſtitutional Lawyers.*

But all who talk upon theſe ſubjects do not ſee ſo far, nor expreſs their diſcoveries ſo clearly as this ſingular Gentleman has done. I verily believe, that among nine tenths of thoſe who are ſo noiſy for *The Revolution*, there are hardly two who agree upon the ſame conception of it. Moſt of them unite in repeating, "*The Conſtitution* "*as eſtabliſhed at The Revolution.*" But whether by this they mean the precedent then eſtabliſhed of removing one King and ſetting up another, which ſeems the moſt worthy cauſe for extravagant joy; or ſomething about the diſpenſing

penſing power, which however ſeems a little unimportant for ſo famous a thing as a Revolution; or ſomething about Popery and Arbitrary Power, which ſounds better, and is better for being general and indefinite; or whether it is not ſomething divided into chapters and ſections, detailing a new ſyſtem of ſuperfine texture, differing from that which prevailed in the popiſh and arbitrary reigns of Charles II. and James II.: whether any thing like theſe, or what elſe has poſſeſſed the brains of theſe men, when they declare themſelves friends of "*The Revolution, and the Conſtitution* "*then eſtabliſhed,*" it is not eaſy to collect.

But they will be very much ſurprized when they are informed, that the matter about which they make ſo much ado, is ſomething very different from what they expected and believed; and further when they ſee it, they will, I promiſe myſelf, think as lightly of it, as men of more ſenſe than they have long thought. Be it known, then, to all thoſe who have taken their "Con-"ſtitutional information" from Pamphlets and Political Societies, that they have not yet looked into the right place for the hiſtory, nature, deſign, and principles of this ſuppoſed Revolution. But if they will read over Statute the 1ſt of William and Mary, Seſſion the ſecond, Chapter

the ſecond, which is ſhorter than any of the papers publiſhed by the Societies for making Revolutions, they will find the whole ſecret explained to them; to which, if they wiſh a little more light, they may add Statute the 1ſt of William and Mary, Seſſion the firſt, Chapter the ſixth, which is ſtill ſhorter than the other.

It appears from the former of theſe ſtatutes, that the Parliament, having placed King William and Queen Mary upon the throne, which King James choſe to leave vacant by his abdication, ſtipulated nothing for the people but upon theſe points where King James had broken the Law, or what was underſtood by the generality of men to be the Law of the Land. Indeed the nature of the caſe demonſtrates this; for, if what he did had not been againſt Law, he would have broken no truſt, and the Parliament would have had no ground of complaint. There is only one exception to this; and that is, James being a Papiſt: *That* certainly was not againſt any Law; but it was againſt the diſpoſition of the Nation; and it was now the pleaſure of Parliament that the King on the throne ſhould be a Proteſtant; which was accordingly in this ſtatute provided for in future.

THE other points, which were twelve in number, were, as I have ſaid, known to be the Law of the Land before, and were now declared and ſecured by expreſs definition in Parliament, only that what had been recent cauſe of alarm, what was ſo deeply impreſſed on the minds of all, and what might be thought, from late experience, to be of a nature that required it ſhould be ſolemnly inculcated, might be held up for admonition to future ages.

WHAT diſappointment and diſcomfiture it muſt be to theſe idolizers of the Conſtitution ſuppoſed to be eſtabliſhed at *The Revolution*, to diſcover at length that they have beſtowed their applauſe and affection upon the ſhreds and patches of old date; and that if they had lived in thoſe wicked reigns of Charles II. and James II. they would have enjoyed in theory, though not in practice (and *theory*, of the two, is more conſidered by modern Reformers), as good a Conſtitution as they have had ſince, with the ſingle exception of a Proteſtant King.

BUT theſe viſionary zealots were reſerved for a diſgrace more mortifying than this, and from a quarter where it was, to ſay the truth, not deſerved, and not at all to be expected. We live

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in an age of *Conſtitutions;* all the world are writing and talking upon Conſtitutions, and unfortunately too many have had opportunities to ſet themſelves at work to carry their idle ſpeculations into practice. What ſhould have happened in the natural courſe of theſe new events, when other countries were becoming free like ourſelves, but that the Engliſh Conſtitution, which had been held out as the famous original, ſhould now be placed at the ſummit of its celebrity; and that the ingenious artificers, who had been working upon it ſo long to bring it to perfect poliſh, and had ſo tortured their brain for topics to ſet off its excellence and beauty, ſhould be ranked among the benefactors of Mankind? But behold the periſhable fame of political theories! At this moment of culmination and triumph; the Conſtitution-makers of France and America, having arrived at ſuch ſkill in this trade as to outdo their maſters, turn ſhort upon them, and tell them,—"The Engliſh have no Conſtitution "at all!" and they follow up this aſſault by attacking *The Revolution* itſelf; queſtioning and reviling it in ſuch terms as if they would inſinuate, that we had no more of a Revolution than of a Conſtitution.

THIS was a blow that ſhould only have been felt by thoſe who had fabricated theſe idols, and dreſſed

dreſſed them out for their own worſhipping; but it muſt be confeſſed that it ruffled many men of a different way of thinking, who have uſed, as we all have, the term *Conſtitution* without annexing to it any of the fanatical notions of its firſt inventors. It moved their ſpleen to hear *that* traduced and reviled, which they had ſo juſtly eſteemed as the model for others to imitate; and this by Americans and Frenchmen! the firſt having formed Conſtitutions that looked like the mangled and degenerate members of ours; the latter propoſing nothing to themſelves but a wretched imitation of thoſe miſhapen and degenerate productions.

A LITTLE reflection, however, prepares us to give an anſwer to theſe miſerable but preſumptuous pretenders.

THE above writers on *this* fancied Conſtitution had been employed to exalt its theoretical perfection, and had worked up certain general poſitions which they laid down as fundamental principles of the Conſtitution. When many imaginations were engaged in the ſame purſuit, a diverſity of ſpeculations was to be expected: poſitions were oppoſed to poſitions, and terrible was the conteſt to ſettle what were and what were not

not the true Principles of the Engliſh Conſtitution. When the Americans came to the buſineſs of erecting a ſettled Government, it was natural for them to call to mind this controverſy in England; and to take warning from this ſuppoſed defect in our Eſtabliſhment. They reſolved therefore, above all things, to guard againſt the like uncertainty in their own. They accordingly began the formation of their Governments by laying down certain fundamental principles, compriſing a Conſtitution in the abſtract, antecedently to their commencing the building in ſubſtance and detail. The French have taken the ſame courſe in the regeneration of their Government. Theſe men, therefore, might very well, though not very handſomely, tell their maſter-workmen in this country that we had no Conſtitution; that is, that thoſe fundamental principles, which had been ſo long vaunted, were only the theories of private men; had no authority, no public ſanction; and were all of them denied by one or other amongſt ourſelves; whereas, on the contrary, *they* had a Conſtitution which they could ſhew, drawn out into plain and clear poſitions, acknowledged by every one, forming the baſis on which the Government was erected, and furniſhing an unvarying regulator, by which the Government might

might be ſet right as often as it ſhould happen in practice to deviate from them.

But thoſe amongſt us who had never given their minds to ſuch reveries might, without yielding any thing, have taken theſe Conſtitution-makers at their word; and at once allowed that we had no Conſtitution in the ſenſe in which *they* underſtand it. As many of them as were Engliſh and Americans had been told this often before; they knew well and long ago that their conceits about Conſtitutional knowledge were conſidered either as illuſion or impoſture, contrived to ſerve the temporary purpoſes of a Party, and reprobated by moſt men of ſenſe in the Kingdom.

In ſhort — The *Government* we know — and the *Laws* we know—but the *Conſtitution* we know not.—It is an unknown region, that has never been viſited but by dreamers, and men who ſee viſions; and the reports they make are ſo contradictory, that no one relies upon them. Yet we can manage to ſpell out of them, that there is reſident there a great deal of faction and ſedition; envy and ambition; and ſomething that looks like eternal warfare of Party. But the Engliſh Government is real and ſubſtantial; we ſee and feel it; we can take its height and its depth;

and we know its movements, becauſe they are regulated by eſtabliſhed and known Laws. This is the only Conſtitution ever ſuppoſed or named by men of ſober minds and ſound underſtanding; that is, *the Conſtitution of our Government*, or *the Conſtitution eſtabliſhed by Law*.

HAVING ſaid ſo much upon this ſuppoſed Revolution, and the Conſtitution ſaid to be formed upon it, I cannot paſs over a Party amongſt us, which I have already named, and which had a conſiderable hand in the tranſactions we have juſt reviewed. Of the *Whig Party* in general, and of the whole of their conduct, I ſhould feel much difficulty in giving an opinion. To ſay the truth, they are believed by many to have done ſo much ſervice, and by many more to have done ſo much miſchief, I know not how to appreciate them. But I have no other concern with their conduct than as they took a part in the deſign which has been carrying on ſo many years, for corrupting the minds of men on the ſubject of our Government and Laws, and in fomenting the diſorders that have been wrought by miſrepreſenting what *they* call *The Revolution*, and the *Conſtitution* ſuppoſed to have been *then eſtabliſhed*.

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This, like every other Party, may be viewed in two lights. In the firſt place, they were a ſet of men who agreed to make a common cauſe, and ſtand by one another in public affairs; and the ſingle object they propoſed to themſelves was, to force the preſent holders out of power, and to force themſelves in. But this would not go down with people of ſenſe who looked on; and as *they* had a great ſway, though not always ſeen, in balancing the weight of Parties, they muſt be won by ſome profeſſion of principles that ſounded well, and promiſed ſomething for the benefit of others than the profeſſors of them. Every ſet of public men muſt, therefore, in the next place, have a ſet of public principles. Upon theſe principles they very liberally and frankly declare, when out of office, they mean to act; and it is taken for granted they will adhere to them when poſſeſſed of power. A party thus furniſhed with principles, ſets out in its purſuit of power, and opens that ſcene which is daily rehearſing in this country, to the annoyance and miſery of all, both actors and ſpectators. I verily believe there is not a partizan, who in his cloſet can review the planning and plotting, the clamor and ſtruggles, the ſhifts and artifices, of the day, without compunction and ſhame. There is not a man of *Good Senſe* in the Kingdom but

has been ſo ſickened with the diſappointments from great undertakers in Party, as to be brought to regard the pretenſions of public leaders little otherwiſe than as the ſtrutting and fretting of ſo many Players upon the Stage. But this belongs to all of them, and is not peculiar to the *Whigs*.

When the Government was ſettled on King William, the Whigs had very juſt title to conſideration; for though they were not the principal perſons who brought about that event, the ſcale being turned by another deſcription of perſons high in Church and State, yet they were the firſt who ſuggeſted the meaſure: they had begun it by the Excluſion-Bill in Charles the Second's time; they had never ceaſed driving on the ſame deſign till it was accompliſhed; and therefore, beſides the merit of activity, they had that of foreſight; having ſo long ago predicted that James would not be borne on the Throne, and that the only meaſure was to exclude him from it. The memory of what was paſt gave weight and importance to the Whig Party, and they immediately gained an aſcendancy, which, by one means or another, was more or leſs maintained afterwards for many years.

ALL this was not compaſſed without the aid of certain public principles, which were made the creed and teſt of the Party. What ſo natural for Whigs as to conceive a ſet of principles ſuggeſted by the recent event in which they had ſuch a ſhare, and took ſo much pride; and what more likely to be well received, and become generally popular, than opinions that were to make the Nation ſatisfied with what had juſt been done, and ſhew that the Settlement then made, and the principles on which it proceeded, were founded in the cleareſt reaſon and wiſdom! Having ſo ſtrong an intereſt in keeping the eyes of the Nation fixed on that event, they went great lengths for the advancement of theſe opinions. Hurried on by the heat of party and of the argument from one topic to another, they at laſt entangled themſelves in theories and ſpeculations which did not properly belong to them, and which they could not view with ſatisfaction. They were, probably, precipitated into theſe difficulties by the dangerous politicians before deſcribed, who were received into the Party, and who, by theſe means, under the name of Whigs, were, in all their writings, promoting their darling object of a Republic.

THERE is too much facility in all Parties to admit among them any one who will join in the cry,

cry, and contribute in any way to ſupport the cauſe. Whether the Whig Party held themſelves out more than any other for receiving partizans, or their principles were more congenial with thoſe who were prone to hazardous experiments on the Government and Laws of this Country; perhaps both theſe might operate in producing the effect; but certain it is, that the Whig Party has contained in it ſome of the moſt dangerous men, and produced ſome of the moſt peſtilent writings, that have appeared. No man, however averſe to our Government, but has had the confidence to call himſelf a Whig; no writing ſo miſchievous and ſeditious, but the Writer of it has juſtified it upon the principles of a *Whig*, and the principles of *The Revolution*.

But, notwithſtanding the exceptionable parts of ſome of theſe Writings, it is certain that the conſtant hammering of the ſame matter had the effect of producing a great deal that paſſed current in the world. The principles of the Whig Party being very comprehenſive and looſe, ſome approaching to one extreme and ſome to the other, could not fail of gratifying a variety of palates, and by the force of one or the other, the Party made a number of friends, and grew to be very powerful in every reſpect.

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THEY were aided, however, by something as powerful as opinions and political theories. The acceſſion of the HANOVER FAMILY to the Throne firſt gave this Party a deciſive ſuperiority over their rivals: and this is a circumſtance in the hiſtory of the Party that deſerves to be remarked; for notwithſtanding they met, upon the whole, with little countenance from their Hero King William, and indeed ſuffered a rebuff, that, with their expectations, muſt have been a great diſcomfiture to them, and certainly ſunk deep into their minds; and although, during the reign of Queen Anne, they were never entertained by her but againſt her will, ſo that they never eſtabliſhed themſelves completely as a reigning Party till the time of George I. and after they had once got that footing, they were permitted to retain it for a great length of time: I ſay, conſidering all this, it is remarkable that, in their Commemorations, they ſhould have nothing more to beſtow on the Hanover Succeſſion, than what I had occaſion before to notice, and that they ſhould keep all their demonſtrations of regard for King William alone.

BUT if this conduct has not ſhewn their gratitude, it has ſhewn another thing, namely, that the profeſſion of Party principles is thought by them a more firm dependence than the obligations of per-

perſonal attachment; and that they have been men ſo wiſe in their generation, as to prefer what they thought was moſt to be relied on.

But during the reigns of George I. and George II. the Whigs, for the moſt part, had an unbounded and uninterrupted ſway; and during all that time it was impoſſible but thoſe termed Whig Principles ſhould have the aſcendency. All other Parties were at that time under ſuſpicions or out of credit; Loyalty and Whiggiſm were like ſynonimous terms; and who could diſpute the ſoundneſs of opinions that were named from the men who were entruſted by their Sovereign, and bore ſway in all parts of the Kingdom? Added to this, a certain conceit had obtained, that Political and Civil Liberty depended upon the very principles profeſſed by this Party; that they were neceſſary concluſions from the enlightened philoſophy of the times; that they were upheld and illuſtrated by the writings of the moſt eminent among the ſearchers after Truth; and that they were likewiſe in uniſon with all the beſt times of Roman and Grecian literature, whoſe remains were the ſtudies of our youth, and the ornament and delight of our riper years.

All theſe ſtrong inducements, whether from the power of the Party, or the dazzle of their principles

principles united, concurred in giving great authority to any thing that bore the name. The Whig Party was the receptacle for all thoſe who belonged to no other Party, or had not given themſelves the trouble to prefer one ſet of political opinions to another, and yet did not like to belong to nobody: in the ſame manner as thoſe who are of no ſect, and have not buſied themſelves about religious opinions, are ſuppoſed to belong to the Church of England. Time was, that a man of a quiet ſpirit, who did not like to expoſe himſelf to cavil or queſtion, would be afraid not to profeſs himſelf a Whig: it muſt be ſomething wrong in the head or the heart that could induce a man to think otherwiſe than as a Whig!

But the empire of opinion, like others, will have its end, and when things are come to the extreme, a change muſt be expected. Men who were contented, as times went, to paſs for good Whigs, did not like to be reſponſible for all the ſophiſticated opinions that were imputed to the Party; and many caſt about to find ſome decent way of alleviating the yoke they were under, without flying out into open revolt againſt their old friends. Some of theſe diſcovered the diſtinction of *Conſtitutional Whigs*, by which they

did not mean the Conſtitution in the ſenſe of the Whigs, which would have been to expreſs *idem per idem*, and would have been a diſtinction without a difference, but the Conſtitution in the ſenſe in which all other men have ever underſtood it; and it was the ſame as if they had ſaid—" We " are Whigs, it is true; but we do not mean " otherwiſe than well towards the antient Go- " vernment and Laws of the Land."

This diſtinction of *Conſtitutional Whigs* made an opening for a terrible ſchiſm in the Party. It afforded an opportunity of ſeparating the good from the bad. But this could not be expected to work exactly in ſuch a manner. No man will write Rogue or Rebel upon his forehead; and why ſhould he paſs under ſuſpicion, when it may be removed by a name that nobody can prevent his aſſuming? Accordingly, as the Republicans before had no ſcruple to call themſelves Whigs, ſo now not a Whig of them but called himſelf a Conſtitutional one; and, conſidering that *Conſtitutional* had two ſenſes, it ſuited the latter as well as the former; and, being of their own invention, it cannot be denied, of the two, they had the beſt title to it.

But the principles of the Whigs were never ſo much put to the teſt as when they came into the Adminiſtration of the Government. It is a well-known complaint of them, that "the Whigs "in place always acted like Tories." This is certainly a juſt remark, and in the nature of things it could not be otherwiſe; nothing can better ſhew than this compariſon, how unjuſtly the Party of Tories have been run down and exploded; and, on the other hand, that the pretenſions of the Whigs are founded in nothing but their own imaginations, and were totally incompatible with our Government and Laws.

For when the Whigs came into office, they found at Whitehall nothing of the *Conſtitution*, and the *Revolution principles*, with which they had been uſed to amuſe themſelves. They were to conduct a Government that had been formed long before their Party or notions were heard of; and they were to conduct it by the Laws of the Land, and the rules of office, that had long been the guides of practice, and could not ſafely be changed or abandoned. For it is a ſad truth to be told to thoſe Gentlemen who are running the career of Oppoſition with great eminence of talent and diſplay of ability, that the object they

propoſe to themſelves, as the reward of all their toil, is one of the dulleſt affairs in the world. When they are in office they muſt have done with mere words, and muſt come to things; they muſt ſet down to work by line and rule; muſt ſearch Laws, hunt precedents, examine minutes of proceedings, conſult and diſcuſs, and purſue a detail; often ſubmitting themſelves to the advice of ſubordinate perſons, who, though never heard of, do more perhaps to keep the machine a-going than their principals.

THIS is but an humble employment for a perſon who has been uſed to work wonders with a ſpeech, or a pamphlet, grounded on the *principles of the Conſtitution as eſtabliſhed at The Revolution.* But this, among other proofs, ſhews the truth of what has been contended, namely, That the Government and Laws are different from the viſionary Conſtitution of which we have heard; and further, that this Government is ſo compacted in all its parts, that every conceit of politicians muſt vaniſh before it; and that their authors, in ſpite of all their theories, muſt conform to the Eſtabliſhment deſcended from their anceſtors.

HAPPILY for us it has been found that, generally ſpeaking, all Parties act on the ſame principle when in office: this is well known, and the cant of the time has been, to impute it to tergiverſation and corrupt impreſſions. But the current of experience has been too uniform not to diſcover the true cauſe of this. The government and Laws are too ſtrong for any Party, and all Parties muſt conform to the eſtabliſhed order of things. In the adminiſtration of Government, Party-principles are nothing, but perſonal qualification is every thing.——Where there is more underſtanding, more attention to buſineſs, and more honeſty, there, and there only, will the Adminiſtration be diſtinguiſhed from others, and the Country feel the difference.

THIS way of thinking has gained ground much of late years; and there has grown more coldneſs than there uſed to be towards men who meant to recommend themſelves principally by their Party connexions. This change in the public ſentiment has had a conſiderable influence on the fortunes of the Whigs. They have long ſunk in conſideration as a Party, and the principles going under their name have become leſs in vogue. At this time I doubt whether it is more

more reputable to be thought a Whig, than ſome years ago it was to be thought a Tory.

But the finiſhing blow to all Party diſtinctions, and to the credit of all political principles that had no reference but to Party diſtinctions, ſeems to me to have been ſtruck in the latter end of the year 1792. At that time an alarm for the ſafety of the Conſtitution as eſtabliſhed by Law, which ſeemed to be threatened by the Republican party from within, aſſiſted by the French Republic from abroad, rouſed the Nation as one man. All Party conſiderations immediately vaniſhed before that of the common intereſt of us all. From that time the attention of all ſober men has been fixed on the preſervation of the Government and Laws; all former diſtinctions of Party are thrown aſide, and the illuſion of their principles is forgotten. There are now no diviſions in the Nation, but that of the Friends to the Conſtitution as eſtabliſhed by Law, and that of the Republicans, who are lying by for an opportunity to level every thing to the Equality of a French Democracy; and there are no political opinions by which men are diſtinguiſhed, but thoſe that are in favour of the Conſtitution as eſtabliſhed by Law, and thoſe who are againſt it.

Thus

THUS have I brought to a concluſion this Hiſtory of the Attempts to corrupt the old Engliſh Conſtitution of Laws and Government. They began and ended by the introduction of *French* principles. We have ſeen how the *Puritans*, educated in the ſchool of *Calvin* and other *French* Proteſtants ſettled in Geneva and the Low Countries, ſet out by queſtioning the Supremacy of the Crown, and the Government by Biſhops; and, contending for a Democratic Government in the Church, taught the like principles for the Government of the State; inculcating the Natural Equality of Man, the Origin of all Power from the People, and the Right they have to call their Governors to account. We have ſeen how theſe *Puritans*, under other names of *Patriots*, *Preſbyterians*, *Republicans*, and *Sectaries*, in the time of Charles the Firſt, overturned the Government in Church and State. We have ſeen how they preſerved their principles after they had an opportunity to mingle with the *Whig party*, and paſs under that denomination; and laſtly, we have ſeen how a new ſet of Republican notions have been lately poured in upon us from *France*, whence have been kindled new flames of Democracy, which it is now the employment of every ſenſible man to keep under and extinguiſh.

BUT

But though Party is deſtroyed, Faction will remain; and Whiggiſm is not of a nature to lie quietly in its grave; its ghoſt ſtill haunts us, hovering round the ſcenes of its former exhibition, and attempting, as well as it can in its preſent unembodied ſtate, to act over again thoſe parts in which it ſo much delighted when in life and vigour. The only viſible appearance of the Party is in the *Whig Club*, which is the mere RUMP and refuſe of the original; and, ſuitably with its preſent contracted and diminiſhed ſtate, it confines its operations principally to the keeping up of an Election-intereſt in Weſtminſter.

I KNOW that moſt of the individuals of it compoſe another Club, which holds certain Commemorations expreſsly with that deſign. In ſuch employments have terminated all the former importance of the *Whig Party;* and, to make their fall ſtill more conſpicuouſly diſgraceful, they have now a tail tacked to them of followers from the rout and rabble of Democracy; men, who have rendered the beſt things odious by *their* corrupt contact; who have made the friendly appellation of *Citizen* a badge of ſeparation and enmity; and the very name of *Liberty* ſuſpected to the ear of an Engliſhman. Yet they have admitted theſe men to cover the empty benches

at

at their meetings, and to partake in that communion of friendſhip, their eating and drinking, which is the ſtrongeſt teſt of approbation that can be given. This mixture of *Whigs* and *Democrats* muſt exhibit a ſtriking picture of the combination of Parties; to ſee the pride of the Ariſtocrat and the pride of the Democrat brought into ſeeming union, yet each determined to deſtroy the other, if the criſis for it ſhould ever arrive; to ſee the equality that prevails among ſo many diſcordant and imperious ſpirits; the apparent conſent and confederation of all in one common cauſe! and then, in the ſame room, to hear a ſpeech from a man, on whoſe lips the aſſembled wiſdom of the Nation has hung with delight for hours, and afterwards to hear another from a *Citizen*, who comes from the Meeting of Democrats in the open air in St. George's Fields, to teach theſe Stateſmen and Members of Parliament what true Liberty is! *

The deſigns of theſe Democrats have been fully expoſed to the public view, on the trials of ſome of them laſt year for High Treaſon; they were then indeed acquitted by a Jury, but they have ſince been *found guilty by their Coun-*

* At the Shakeſpeare Tavern, Oct. 10, 1795.

try, on the evidence of the proceedings at the trial, which are in the hands of every-body.

THIS new ſet of Reformers pretend to have no other object than Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments: and they have choſen this pretence, firſt, becauſe they muſt profeſs ſome principles, that do not quite ſpeak rebellion; ſecondly, becauſe this ſpecific project has been vented by ſome men, not of the loweſt conſideration in any thing but the article of GOOD SENSE; and by others, not of the higheſt in any thing but in their wealth and *rank*; thirdly, becauſe they knew (and we know too) that ſhould they ſucceed in carrying this point, the deſtruction of Monarchy muſt inevitably follow; and a levelling Republic may then be ſubſtituted according to the imaginations and will of this rabble.

BUT who are the actors that are moſt diſtinguiſhed and forward in carrying on this deſign? In truth they are of a deſcription, that in other times would render them too contemptible to be the objects of dread; but in theſe days, when every thing debaſed is to be extolled, and every thing noble and excellent is to be vilified and contemned; and when this has been actually exemplified among our neighbours, who promiſe

aid to propagate this ſubverſion among us; under ſuch circumſtances, the very meanneſs of the cauſe conſtitutes the magnitude of the apprehenſion. The confidence we ſee in them, cannot be without great conſciouſneſs of ſtrength; and, when the progreſs is all under ground, we may hear the exploſion before we have any knowledge of the miners. The attempts of theſe *Reformers* are all among the claſſes of ſociety, with which we have neceſſarily too little intercourſe. Artificers and handicraftſmen, journeymen and apprentices in great manufacturing towns, are wrought upon by ſurmiſes of grievances, and repreſentation of remedies, which ſet them a madding after politics and public affairs: this, with an idea of their own importance, inſpired by the doctrine of unalienable Rights and the natural Equality of Man, makes them uneaſy in their preſent circumſtances, and ready and on fire for any change. This fever is kept up by their Clubs and Affiliated Societies, in the *Jacobin* faſhion; and by inflammatory publications, that are given away or ſold at a trifle, and that are diſperſed with incredible aſſiduity and in great numbers. One principal object with them has been to ſeduce the ſoldiery from their duty, by painting to them their peculiar ſituation in every way that could

poſſibly generate diſſatisfaction and inſubordination.

THESE are the loweſt orders in this herd of politicians; and as they are the corrupted and miſled, they call, perhaps, more for our pity than ſevere condemnation. But the corruptors, thoſe who are the profeſſors and miſſionaries of Sedition, are of a different claſs. Theſe are men of a better ſtation in life, but of a worſe condition in mind; who, feeling nothing but diſcontent and turbulence in their own boſoms, would willingly light up a general confuſion around them; men bankrupt in their purſe or their character, who cannot be worſe circumſtanced than they are, and ſee no hope but in a Revolution; whoſe parts have been meliorated by education and ſharpened by neceſſity; able to perform much, and ready to undertake any thing; knowing the world and the ways of it; with activity, and the gift of ſpeech; agitators, always in action or preparing for it.

WHAT may not be accompliſhed by the miſchievous induſtry of ſuch inſtruments, employed upon ſuch materials? The topics to which they reſort for perſuaſion, might miſlead and captivate

thoſe

thoſe who had better underſtandings than *their* auditors; indeed theſe profeſſors declaim till the very orator is deceived himſelf. To tell men, that they are by nature equal to their ſuperiors, and that the preſent inequality between them is brought about by oppreſſion and tyranny;—to lay down, that the people may make and unmake the Government, and to tell the populace that *they* are the People;—in the hearing of the poor and neceſſitous, to cenſure and vilify the rich and opulent;—to diſparage thoſe put in authority in the preſence of the evil-doers, to whom they ſhould be a terror;—to make ſport of the perſon and office of the King himſelf; and train the minds of men to a contempt of his authority and the Government they live under;—theſe are topics that are too congenial with the ſelf-love, the malice, and lightneſs of ſome minds, not to be heard with approbation and applauſe; and they cannot long and repeatedly be declaimed on, ſometimes in Political Clubs, and ſometimes in Public Lectures, to a numerous auditory, without warping the beſt diſpoſed to an habitual diſlike for the Government, and a diſpoſition to attempt, or concur in any change that ſhall be propoſed; more eſpecially if the change is to place them, as they believe, in a ſituation to become their own Legiſlators and Governors.

Such

SUCH is the deſcription of the new *Democrats* who at preſent infeſt the Country; a ſet, who in the meanneſs of their perſonal character, in the danger of their principles, and in the open profeſſion of them, exceed every thing we have yet had in the nature of Party; a ſet, that are not a Party, but a Conſpiracy; a band of Catilinarians, that look only for plunder and bloodſhed, general confuſion and anarchy.

AND theſe are the men with whom the *Refuſe* of the *Whig Club* have fraternized to make a common cauſe! the dregs of the upper claſſes of ſociety mingled with the dregs of the lower! This union cannot be viewed but with diſguſt and deteſtation. If one of the parties meant to acquire patrons of their cauſe, they are not to be blamed; and the getting into ſo much good company is certainly an ornament that they needed. As to the others, the beſt motive that can be aſcribed to them is, that they meant to make uſe of theſe as partizans for ſtrengthening their oppoſition to the Adminiſtrators of the Government. But this is a traffic that muſt loſe them in character what they will never, by theſe means, recover in numbers. Whatever political men may think of ſuch condeſcenſions, they may aſſure themſelves, that diſhoneſty and impoſture will not procure con-

fidence

fidence to public men any more than to private; and that mean and unworthy connexions, formed upon no band of union but the baſe gains to be made by them, are equally diſgraceful in public and in private life. And they ſhould be told further, that ſincerity and plain-dealing is ſtill ſo well liked, that I doubt whether, with all their miſchief, the political principles of one of theſe parties make them ſo odious, as the moral principles of the other: men may hate the one, but the others they will deſpiſe.

But I will not detain your attention any longer, at preſent. To exhibit the Conſtitution of the Engliſh Government in its true form; to ſeparate the corrupt gloſſes and conſtructions that have, from time to time, been impoſed upon it; to expoſe the pretexts of Parties; to take off the maſk from *Patriots* and *Reformers*; and to purſue the machinations of the *Jacobins*; theſe make an employment to which I ſhall return in due time: and ſuch *further Thoughts* I ſhall addreſs to you. Theſe are matters, above all others, that call for the conſideration of thoſe amongſt us, who are friends to order, love Quiet, and are poſſeſſed of the Good Sense by which Engliſhmen are uſed to be guided.

At

AT the preſent moment, YOUR attention will be fixed on an object of more immediate concern. The Parliament is now aſſembled. This is a ſeaſon when your ſuperintending influence is moſt needed, and, we uſually ſee, it is then moſt happily predominant. But it is a ſeaſon, when the ſpirits of men, whether good or bad, are moſt in motion; and all YOUR prudence is wanted to preſerve us from folly and wickedneſs.—YOU, therefore, YOU at leaſt, WATCH.

October 29, 1795.

END OF THE FIRST LETTER.

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